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NOTE

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2619th MEETING

Held in New York on Thursday, 10 October 1985, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Vernon A. WALTERS
(United States of America).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Australia, Burkina Faso, China, Denmark, Egypt, France, India, Madagascar, Peru, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2619)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. The Middle East problem including the Palestinian question:
   Letter dated 30 September 1985 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17507)

The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The Middle East problem including the Palestinian question:
Letter dated 30 September 1985 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17507)

1. The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Israel, Kuwait and the Syrian Arab Republic in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Netanyahu (Israel), Mr. Abulhassan (Kuwait) and Mr. El-Fattal (Syrian Arab Republic) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

2. The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received from the representative of Egypt a letter dated 9 October 1985 [*S/17552*] which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation to Mr. Farouq Qaddoumi, head of the Political Department and member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to participate in the Council's discussion of the item entitled 'The Middle East problem including the Palestinian question', in accordance with the Council's past practice."

3. The proposal by Egypt is not made pursuant to rule 37 or rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, but if approved by the Council, the invitation to participate in the debate would confer on the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) the same rights of participation as those conferred on Member States pursuant to rule 37.

4. Does any member of the Council wish to speak on that proposal?

5. Since that appears not to be the case, I shall make the following statement in my capacity as the representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

6. The United States has consistently taken the position that, under the provisional rules of procedure, the only legal basis on which the Council may grant a hearing to persons speaking on behalf of non-governmental entities is rule 39. For 39 years the United States has supported a generous interpretation of rule 39 and would certainly not object had this matter been raised under that rule. We are, however, opposed to special, *ad hoc* departures from orderly procedure.

7. The United States consequently opposes extending to the PLO the same rights to participate in the proceedings of the Council as if that organization represented a Member State.

8. We certainly believe in listening to all points of view, but none of that requires violating the rules. In particular, the United States does not agree with the recent practice of the Council which appears selectively to try to enhance the prestige of those who wish to speak in the Council, through a departure from the rules of procedure. We consider this special practice to be without legal foundation and to constitute an abuse of the rules.

9. For those reasons, the United States requests that the terms of the proposed invitation be put to the vote. Of course, the United States will vote against.

10. I now resume my function as PRESIDENT. If no other member of the Council wishes to speak, I shall take it that the Council is ready to vote on the proposal by Egypt.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, India, Madagascar, Peru, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Denmark, France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

There were 10 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions. The proposal was adopted.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Qaddoumi (Palestine Liberation Organization) took a place at the Council table.

11. The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform the Council that I have received from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People a letter dated 9 October which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that I be allowed to participate in the Security Council's consideration of the item entitled 'The Middle East problem including the question of Palestine', in accordance with the provisions of rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People."

12. On previous occasions the Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In accordance with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

It was so decided.

13. The PRESIDENT: The Security Council is meeting today in response to the request contained in a letter dated 30 September from the representative of India to the President of the Council [*S/15707*].

14. Mr. KRISHNAN (India): The question of Palestine and the tense situation in the Middle East have been continuously debated in the United Nations for several decades now. Numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council on various aspects of the problem have remained unimplemented. Our meeting today, convened in pursuance of the decision taken at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Luanda from 4 to 7 September 1985, should provide an opportunity for an in-depth discussion of the question in all its aspects with a view to analysing the major obstacles which stand in the way of finding a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem and restoring to the Palestinian people their inalienable and national rights. We believe that a just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the problem, is the crucial element in a just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East.

15. The Council last considered the question of Palestine in a comprehensive manner in 1976 and, briefly, in 1977, at the request of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Since then, while the Council has considered different aspects of the situation in the Middle East and pronounced on them, there has been no opportunity for a comprehensive discussion. Our request today is therefore aimed at focusing attention on the basic issue of securing the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

16. The conflict in the Middle East poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Recent disturbing developments in the area have introduced even more complex and dangerous elements into an already fragile environment. Israel's occupation of Lebanon, in defiance of Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), its harassment of the Palestinian and Lebanese people, its policy of establishing new settlements in the occupied territories and its aggressive actions, including the latest attack on Tunisia, designed to intimidate its Arab neighbours with the threat and use of massive force, have resulted in further destabilization. The region has witnessed the introduction of sophisticated armaments on an unprecedented scale. The Middle East with its rich resources is a strategic area, and preventing the conflict from causing a wider conflagration is therefore a matter of global concern. Time is of the essence in finding an early solution to the problem.

17. The non-aligned countries are firmly committed to the pursuit of peace. We are dedicated to the uplifting and welfare of our peoples, free from outside influences, pressures or presences. Our objective is to work ardently for peace by reducing tensions and eliminating conflict so that we can concentrate on our development priorities. Unfortunately, however, the Middle East has known no peace for a long time.

18. India's own sympathy for the people of Palestine and its support for the establishment of a Palestinian State are rooted in our awareness of the historical, territorial and national identity of the Palestinians. Even during the days of our struggle for national independence, our leaders identified themselves with the Palestinian cause and raised their voices in support of the establishment of an indepen-

dent Palestinian homeland. The continuing struggle of the brave Palestinians evokes sympathy and understanding among the people of India to this day. The decision to partition Palestine was taken in the same year as India became independent. India secured its independence, but the people of Palestine were banished from their own lands. Many countries since then have also become free and are now masters of their own destinies. However, not only do the Palestinians remain homeless, but even more of their lands have since been occupied.

19. Valiant people have been driven from their hearths and homes. Their lands, even beyond those defined by General Assembly resolution 181 (II), adopted at the time of the partition of Palestine, in 1947, have remained forcibly occupied. Israel continues to thwart the will of the international community in spite of numerous United Nations resolutions. Acts of repression and terror, denial of fundamental rights and various violations of human rights have become the order of the day. Such actions by the occupying Power are in clear contravention of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[1] and are obviously designed to consolidate Israel's stranglehold on the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories and to annex them. Further, Israel's actions are undertaken on the pretext of safeguarding its security. It is obvious that security is equally vital and important to all States in the region and there is no logic in treating the security of one of them as pre-eminent. Israel is seeking to bring about permanent geopolitical and demographic changes in the region at the expense of the Palestinians. This must be prevented.

20. The efforts by the international community to find a comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East and its core, the question of Palestine, received a fresh impetus at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983. The Geneva Declaration on Palestine[2] called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine.

21. It was envisaged that the proposed peace conference would be convened under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the PLO, as well as the United States, the USSR and other concerned States, on an equal footing. In this context, the Security Council was given the primary responsibility for creating appropriate institutional arrangements to guarantee and carry out the accords of the conference. The importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution was stressed. It was further stressed that partial solutions are inadequate and that delays in seeking a comprehensive solution will not eliminate tension in the region.

22. The recommendations of the Geneva Conference were overwhelmingly endorsed at the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sessions of the General Assembly. It will be recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, urgently to undertake preparatory measures to convene the international peace conference on the Middle East and to report to the General Assembly on his efforts. In its resolution 39/49 D of 11 December 1984, the General Assembly reiterated its conviction that the convening of the conference would constitute a major contribution by the United Nations towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It further requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the conference. We are indeed grateful to the Secretary-General for initiating a process of consultations, in pursuance of the above-mentioned resolutions, with the members of the Security Council and with other concerned States for the convening of the proposed peace conference.

23. In its own response to the Secretary-General, the Government of India conveyed its broad agreement with the plan of action proposed by the Secretary-General. We suggested, however, that some flexibility be retained in the selection of participants for the conference. In regard to the time frame for the conference, it was our view that the situation in West Asia does not brook any delay and that urgent preparatory measures should be undertaken so that the conference could be convened at the earliest possible time. We deeply regret that, while most of the States consulted have indicated their agreement to the proposed peace conference, some others have not found it possible to do so.

24. In his report to the previous session of the General Assembly on the situation in the Middle East, the Secretary-General stated:

> "The history of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East and of the Palestine question has thus been a long record of missed opportunities punctuated by wars and violence that have only served to complicate the situation further and to create new misery and new obstacles to peace." [*S/16792, para. 42.*]

25. Indeed, the time has come to pursue with determination our search for ways and means to remedy the injustice done to the Palestinian people and to find an early solution to this tragic conflict.

26. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has from its inception consistently advocated a comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Middle East problem and the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was at the initiative of the non-aligned countries that the majority of United Nations resolutions on the subject have been adopted. In past years, the non-aligned countries have been particularly active in mobilizing international support against Israeli actions in the occupied territories and its invasion of Lebanon. The non-aligned countries have also reaffirmed their firm opposition to Israeli practices and policies in occupied Arab and Pales-

tinian territories and called for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

27. At the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi from 7 to 12 March 1983, this question was exhaustively examined. Fundamental principles for the solution of the problem were again reaffirmed. In the declaration adopted by the Conference, the Heads of State or Government affirmed:

> "that a just and durable peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by it since 1967, including Jerusalem, and without the achievement of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment and exercise in Palestine of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right . . . to establish the Palestinian Independent State in its homeland, Palestine." [*S/15675 and Corr.1 and 2, annex, p. 25.*]

The recently concluded Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Luanda, reaffirmed these well-established principles.

28. We should like to acknowledge the important role played by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under its distinguished Chairman, in finding a just solution to the question of Palestine. As a member of the Committee, India has always supported its efforts to secure the rights of the Palestinian people and to promote their cause. Though the basic recommendations of the Committee have so far remained unimplemented, its activities during the past years have served to increase support from the international community for the cause of Palestine.

29. Like others, we are profoundly shocked and distressed by acts of violence against innocent persons. We condemn terrorism in all its forms, wherever it occurs and by whomever it is committed. The sense of indignation and outrage felt by all members of the Council was unequivocally expressed in the statement we issued yesterday through you, Mr. President [*S/17554*].

30. It should be clear to all by now that in the Middle East the surest way to put an end to violence is through a just peace. And that peace cannot be achieved except through a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine which secures for the Palestinians their inalienable rights.

31. It is well known that the primary reason for the lack of progress in finding a comprehensive solution is the intransigence of Israel, which has deliberately defied the will of the international community. We appeal to all members of the international community to display statesmanship and to join in the effort to find a speedy and just solution to the problem, based on the principles enunciated by the United Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

32. This question has become a great challenge to the conscience of man. The passage of time may make more difficult and more remote the possibility of resolving the Palestinian problem through peaceful negotiations. It is therefore imperative that there be no further delay.

33. As a first step, we call for the discontinuation of the Israeli policy of settlements, an immediate freeze on new settlements and the dismantling of those already established. At the same time, Israel should withdraw totally and unconditionally from Lebanon. Israel should also withdraw from all Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and from the Golan Heights. Increased and sustained efforts towards a just, durable and comprehensive settlement must be undertaken as a matter of the highest priority. To achieve this, the only viable course is the early convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East in accordance with well-established guidelines endorsed by the United Nations.

34. We hope that the Security Council will demonstrate the necessary will to take resolute action.

35. The PRESIDENT: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

36. The Council meets once again today to consider the situation in the Middle East. The situation is indeed serious. It is not improving. It grows more violent daily. Yesterday, the number of innocent lives lost in the search for peace in the Middle East increased again, with the murder of my countryman. Terrorism is but one aspect of the Middle East situation but it dominates all others and makes the quest for peace even more elusive.

37. The United States welcomes a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Let me say unequivocally that the peace we all desire will not be achieved by terrorists or through their actions, but only at the negotiating table.

38. Relief is the word which best describes the emotion we feel at the news that the passengers and crew of the Italian ship *Achille Lauro* have been released and that this latest act of terrorism and violence has ended. Our relief is tinged with sadness and anger, however. Sadness to learn that one American, 69-year-old Leon Klinghoffer, has been brutally murdered by these terrorists and anger that once again the contagious disease of terrorism has claimed a victim. We are relieved, but we are not satisfied. We are not satisfied because we are not at all comforted that this terrifying cycle of violence and terrorism against innocent victims will not continue and increase.

39. On this occasion most of the passengers were quite fortunate. They at least are safe and sound and on their way home. Mr. Klinghoffer and the victims of other terrorist acts have not been so lucky. We need only reflect for a moment on those who have been brutally slaughtered at the hands of terrorists. These have included nationals of countries represented around this table. They include a Soviet diplomat and an American sailor, as well as private

citizens of Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and many other countries. In addition, nationals of France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, the United States and other countries are still as we meet being held hostage. These victims' only crime was to fly on a plane or cruise on a ship or work at an embassy or engage in some other totally peaceful activity. They are not as lucky as most of the passengers and crew of the *Achille Lauro*.

40. The world must condemn vigorously and actively these actions. As Secretary Shultz said this morning in Washington, "terrorism is a great threat to all of us, and it must be dealt with and stopped".

41. For centuries, pirates have justly been designated as *hostis humani generis*, the common enemies of all mankind. The long experience that the international community had with their outrages led to the recognition of and confirmed the universal criminality of these sea-based terrorists. We know today that terrorists of all sorts are also common enemies of mankind. Whether their attacks are on land, on sea or in the air, they are cut from the same sorry fabric. They are of one ilk. There is today no people, no government, no diplomat, no traveler who can count himself immune from the terrorists. They are the enemies of us all.

42. The terrorist has put himself beyond the pale of civilized humanity. He should be shunned by all. If he seeks sanctuary he should be turned away. If he claims support he should be denounced. If he is apprehended he should be prosecuted. Every terrorist attack is an attack on the world community. Every justification offered for terrorism undermines the rule of law. Every concession to the terrorist diminishes our humanity.

43. We are grateful to the President of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General for their statements of yesterday. The Secretary-General said that he had learned with horror of the hijacking of the ship, which constitutes yet another escalation of violence in the Middle East. He urged those responsible to understand that their act was criminal and unjustifiable and should be ended without delay in a manner that would avoid further suffering by the innocent victims. The President of the General Assembly was equally outspoken. We believe that those strong statements have been beneficial in ending this terrible ordeal and in limiting its violence. The Council also spoke out strongly and with one voice on this matter yesterday.

44. We call upon the United Nations to speak out firmly and unmistakably against such acts of terrorism. President Reagan said in July:

> "Much needs to be done by all of us in the community of civilized nations. We must act against the criminal menace of terrorism with the full weight of the law, both domestic and international. We will act to indict, apprehend and prosecute those who commit the kind of atrocities the world has witnessed in recent weeks.
>
> "We can act together as free peoples who do not wish to see our citizens kidnapped or shot or blown out of the skies, just as we acted together to rid the seas of piracy at the turn of the last century."

45. The world again seems to be gravely threatened by pirates. Over the last few centuries the civilized world was thought to have made progress in establishing non-violent rules of political conduct. International rules of war, human rights resolutions and, indeed, the fundamental premises underlying the establishment of the United Nations are all based on the assumption that political violence and political freedom do not mix. Political intimidation, the object of the use of terrorism, is antithetical to freedom of political expression, the cornerstone of democratic society.

46. As Secretary of State Shultz said:

> "Terrorism is a step backwards. It is a step towards anarchism and decay. In the broadest sense, terrorism represents a return to barbarism in the modern age. If the modern world cannot face up to the challenge, then terrorism and the lawlessness and inhumanity that come with it will gradually undermine all that the modern world has achieved and make further progress impossible."

47. My Government is relieved that this particularly horrible event is over, but we must not lessen our vigilance. We urge all peoples and governments to renounce further acts of terrorism, whatever their presumed justification, as inimical to the norms of civilization.

48. I now resume my function as PRESIDENT. The next speaker is the observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization, on whom I now call.

49. Mr. QADDOUMI (Palestine Liberation Organization) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I wish at the outset to speak of the hijacking of the Italian ship carrying almost 400 passengers and crew. During the incident the Italian Government asked the PLO to intervene and to attempt to save the lives of those on board the ship. Consonant with our belief in the rights of the individual, and having repeatedly made such efforts in the past, we stepped in. Earlier, during the tenure of Secretary of State Kissinger, when we were in Beirut, we provided protection for American lives. We did indeed protect the lives of United States citizens as they departed Beirut. Mr. Kissinger sent us a letter of thanks, through the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. During President Carter's term, we were requested to intervene and assist in securing the release of the hostages held in Iran. Through our intervention the fraternal country of Iran released 13 American hostages. We protected the United States Embassy in Beirut even though we knew perfectly well that the United States maintained a position hostile to our cause. But American policy is one thing, and American lives are another. We hold civilian lives to be of great importance.

50. We co-operated and saved the 400 people who were on board that ship because we believe in the freedom of man and his right to live. We have condemned, at our

National Council, international as well as State terrorism, such as the kind that has been practised several times by Israel.

51. I should like to ask: is there evidence that those hijackers killed that civilian? Where is that evidence? He was 69 years old and his family stated that he had frequently suffered before from heart attacks. He was also suffering from paralysis. I wonder why and how those people could attack or kill such an old person. I am not defending that act, but I am defending logic and reality. Has the United States forgotten about the 165 Palestinians who were killed in Tunisia, while today it makes an accusation without having any sound material evidence to substantiate the charge.

52. Despite all that, Chairman Arafat expressed his condolences to the family of the passenger who was killed—although there is no proof so far that he was murdered—because he believes in the right of every person to life and liberty.

53. Enough of that. I shall now deal with the main issue, which is at the root of all the problems and in which the United States and Israel are the only obstacles to a solution. Israel is the creator of terrorism and tension in the area.

54. I should like first to thank the representatives of the States that afforded us the opportunity once again to address the Security Council and to participate in the work of the current meeting, which is devoted to a debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. We see this invitation as a reaffirmation of the complete faith of the international community, which has been repeatedly expressed on different occasions and in numerous resolutions of the United Nations, and the conviction that the Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East conflict and that the participation of the PLO, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in all the endeavours and efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive and just solution to that conflict, is an indispensable element that can never be circumvented.

55. During the last few days the Council has been seized of the question of the perfidious Israeli aggression against fraternal Tunisia and against the PLO [*see S/17509*]. The Council condemned that act of aggression, although, unfortunately, it failed to impose the necessary sanctions against Israel under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. Israel has proven throughout its history that it is not a peace-loving State and that its policies and practices pose great dangers to international peace and security. Similarly, we were not surprised at the unwillingness of the United States to vote in favour of the moderate resolution adopted by the Council [*resolution 573 (1985)*]. That course of action proved that the United States persists in the same role that it had played earlier in impeding the proceedings of the Council and in preventing it from deterring Israel and from taking the necessary steps that would contribute to advance the peace process in the Middle East. The United States thus did not measure up to its role as a super-Power, a permanent member of the Security Council, a State that assumes responsibility in that capacity for the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations as well as for ensuring international peace and security.

56. That wanton Israel aggression against the sovereignty of a small peaceful country that is located several thousand miles away from Israel and whose constructive role in and quest for the maintenance of peace in the area, is rather well known, led some to believe that the United States would open its eyes and reconsider its position which is biased towards and limitlessly supportive of Israel. Thus the United States can give credibility to its claims that it seeks to establish peace in the Middle East and to confront real terrorism, whatever its source.

57. However, most unfortunately, this latest event has undoubtedly proved that the United States of America still ignores the glaring facts in the area, to which all those who participated in the debate during the last few days have referred. The United Nations has also repeated the facts in its resolutions on the Middle East and on the Palestinian question.

58. We closely followed the debates last week, which dealt with the essence of the question about which the Council is meeting today. Those debates clearly showed the extent of the isolation of Israel and the United States and how they do not conform to the international understanding of the nature of the conflict in the area and the methods necessary to achieve a solution.

59. The persistence of such a situation does not augur well for the future of peace in the area but rather threatens a widening of the cycle of violence and an escalation of tension to rather grave and unpredictable dimensions.

60. Everyone realizes that the recent Israeli act of aggression against Tunisia and against the PLO is actually a blow against peace efforts in the area, and not merely an act of limited retaliation. It was carried out and justified on flimsy and unacceptable pretexts. We warned in our statement a few days ago about such criminal acts of aggression, which are part and parcel of the Zionist dogma and of Israeli policy and practices and are directed against the Palestinian people and the Arab nation. Those acts can never intimidate us into capitulating. On the contrary, they give us more strength to persevere in confronting such acts and in defending our rights and our territory, whatever the sacrifices.

61. This meeting of the Council is convened at the request of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to consider the Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question. It is taking place within the framework of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, which called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, urgently to undertake preparatory measures to convene the conference. The resolution also invited the

Council to facilitate the organization of the conference and requested the Secretary-General to report on his efforts to the General Assembly at the thirty-ninth session.

62. As is well-known from the Secretary-General's report [*S/16409 and Add.1*], the United States obstructed all those good efforts. In 1976, when the question of Palestine was before the Council, the United States exercised the right of veto in order to frustrate the adoption of a constructive draft resolution [*S/11940*] calling for a reaffirmation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and for measures to ensure the sovereignty and independence of all the States in the area and the right of peoples to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders. As is crystal clear from the draft resolution, the American veto was directed solely against the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, because the other points in the draft resolution were no different from the framework of resolution 242 (1967), which is the only resolution the United States insists should be implemented out of all the United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. As its representative told the General Assembly in 1978; the United States had had to recognize that resolution 242 (1967) did not deal with the political dimension of the Palestinian question.

63. Furthermore, when the PLO, in a joint effort with our brothers in Jordan, participated in advancing the march for peace, the United States regressed and even refused a meeting with a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, putting forward conditions that can never be accepted, since they are detrimental to a matter that is uncontroversial—that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The right to self-determination of our Palestinian people is a sacred right that can never be disregarded or compromised.

64. When the Israeli representative speaks of peace and when the United States expresses its desire to advance the peace process in the Middle East, time and again events prove that Israel and the United States are the ones that obstruct the achievement of the desired peace in the area. Events and facts have proved that the PLO has made sincere and constructive efforts in that respect. All those efforts have met only further denial of our rights, more suppression, terrorism, murder and displacement of our people. That simply means that what Israel and the United States wish to impose on us is capitulation, not peace—and that we shall never accept.

65. In its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, the General Assembly accepted the establishment of an Arab state in Palestine side by side with a Jewish State. It requested the Security Council to make efforts to implement that resolution, but, most unfortunately, the Council at that time did not shoulder its responsibilities. On the contrary, it recommended that Israel be accepted as a Member State of the United Nations, without taking account of the results.

66. Since then, until this very day, Israel has systematically tried to obliterate the Palestinian people and to efface its national identity, usurping its territory and homeland, expropriating its lands and property and preventing the return of the Palestinian refugees. In addition, it waged wars against the neighbouring Arab countries. It committed retaliatory raids as well as acts of genocide in Deir Yassin, Qibya, the refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila and, finally, in the Tunisian capital. Can such a policy and such practices constitute evidence of a desire for peace?

67. In 1967 Israel waged war against the Arab States. It occupied all the Palestinian territories and other Arab territories in Egypt, Syria and other countries. In 1982 it waged an aggressive war against Lebanon, and still occupies part of Lebanon's territory. It has been bent on widening the circle of war and violence to embrace Iraq and Tunisia and perhaps other countries where Palestinians live as a result of their displacement from their homeland. Could such a policy and such practices constitute proof of a desire for peace?

68. Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which are Palestinian territories, took place more than 18 years ago, and since then it has appropriated our territories and established settlements, thus flouting the resolutions of the Security Council. It has expelled our people, detaining thousands of them in prisons and detention camps. It has expelled civic leaders and tried to assassinate some of them, closed schools and universities, desecrated houses of worship and enacted oppressive laws and legislation, turning our country into a huge concentration camp. Could that policy and these practices constitute evidence of a desire for peace?

69. Tragically, through this policy and these practices, Israel brings destruction and suffering not only on the Palestinians but also on the Jews themselves. Israel has become a hotbed of racism and extremism. Its expansionist and aggressive policy has brought economic destruction upon Israel itself, as well as moral and ethical bankruptcy, thus showing its disregard of the tenets of the Jewish religion and of the victims who suffered at the hands of the Nazis, from whom Israel has inherited all its systems, ideals and practices.

70. Indeed it seems that Israel's arrogance of power, in which it can indulge thanks to the support it receives from the United States, prevents it from seeing the facts clearly and makes it cynical about the rights of our people and the international community. It has never put forward a single peace initiative; it has never accepted a single peace initiative. On the contrary, it has always been bent on aborting and impeding such initiatives. While our Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, confronts the most extreme conditions of occupation, displacement and aggression and faces the Israeli war machine and its inconceivably repressive, terrorist practices, it has never given up its peaceful goal: a just and lasting peace that would guarantee the inalienable rights of our people as recognized by the United Nations, including its right to return, to self-determination and to establish its independent State on its national territory.

71. In the light of that noble goal, the PLO has welcomed all constructive international efforts and initiatives

designed to bring peace to the area. We welcomed the joint Vance-Gromyko statement of 1 October 1977 calling for the resumption of the meetings of the Peace Conference on the Middle East at Geneva, which took into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

72. Our Palestinian National Council also welcomed the Soviet initiative put forward by President Brezhnev. In 1982, we made a substantial contribution to the forging of the Arab peace plan adopted by the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez [*see S/15510, annex*], which met with wide acceptance in the international community. At the last two sessions of our Palestinian National Council—that is the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, held in Algeria and at Amman respectively—the Arab peace plan was also adopted. In 1983 the United Nations organized an international conference—the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, which was held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September—at which numerous resolutions were adopted, and these were later endorsed by the General Assembly. The PLO accepted those resolutions, foremost among which was that known as the Geneva Declaration on Palestine,[2] which contains guidelines and practical measures that we believe it would be appropriate to restate here, because in our view they still represent a valid foundation for the establishment of peace in our area. Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Geneva Declaration read as follows:

> "In order to give effect to these guidelines, the Conference considers it essential that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. This peace conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and other concerned States, on an equal footing. In this context the Security Council has a primary responsibility to create appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and to carry out the accords of the international peace conference.
>
> "The International Conference on the Question of Palestine emphasizes the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution to the problem of Palestine. The Conference is convinced that partial solutions are inadequate and delays in seeking a comprehensive solution do not eliminate tensions in the region."

73. The Conference also adopted the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights[3] intended to allow the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights.

74. Time is of the essence. We must not allow conditions in the territory that make it possible for Israel to act in accordance with its whims and for the situation to be exacerbated and create negative consequences for the prospects of peace there as well as international peace and security. The peoples of the world have become impatient with the Israeli position. Our people and our nation too have become impatient, but we are not discouraged from confronting the Israeli occupation that weighs so heavily on us or from resisting that occupation by all legitimate means.

75. Allowing this situation to continue, maintaining the *status quo*, can only worsen that situation and make it more complex. The despair about the achievement of a just and comprehensive solution will lead to extremism. And the price of extremism is high, and sometimes even tragic. It is paid by the peoples of the world.

76. It is high time that responsibilities were shouldered by everyone, especially the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is high time that everyone realized that all attempts to circumvent the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, to deny them those rights—including the attempt to ignore the PLO, which the Palestinian people, out of a deep awareness of the situation and out of their faith, have accepted as their sole legitimate representative—will never lead to the desired peace.

77. We therefore call on the Council to bear in mind General Assembly resolution 38/58, to which I have already referred, to clear the way for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts and prepare the convocation of an international conference, within the framework of the United Nations and on the basis of all the United Nations resolutions concerning the Palestinian question. That is the right path to take towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in our region.

78. I wish to quote now from the statement made by Brother Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, to the General Assembly in 1974. He appealed to the Member States to continue their quest for peace, and he said:

> "Today I have come bearing an olive branch in one hand and a rifle in the other hand. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."[4]

79. Those words are still vibrant with truth and reality. The events and the facts prove that war has started in Palestine and that there can be no peace without the Palestinian people.

80. Mr. KHALIL (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Council is meeting today, pursuant to a decision taken by the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Angola from 4 to 7 September 1985, to consider "The Middle East problem including the Palestinian question"—as the agenda item is worded.

81. We believe that that decision responded to a general feeling—whether on the regional level, in the Middle East, or at the international level—that a new and strong impe-

tus must be given to the efforts to achieve a settlement to the Middle East problem including the Palestinian question, an impetus that would reaffirm confidence in the peace efforts and put an end to the present escalation of tension in the region.

82. This call made by the Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned countries for the Council to consider once again the situation in the Middle East and the Palestinian question is a reaffirmation of confidence in the United Nations, during the fortieth anniversary of its founding, and in the primary role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. What we all expect from the Council, in the light of what I have just said, is that it discharge its primary function and set the Palestinian question—the core of the conflict in the Middle East—on the right path that will lead to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of that conflict.

83. The Secretary-General's report (A/40/1) on the work of the Organization in 1985[5] contains a general assessment of the activities and achievement of the United Nations during the past 40 years.

84. With regard to the work of the Council, the Secretary-General in his report suggested that it should make a deliberate and concerted effort to solve one or two of the major problems before it by making fuller use of the measures available to it under the Charter.

85. In their statements at the commemorative meeting of the Security Council, held on 26 September 1985, a number of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of States members of the Council made specific mention of that recommendation and spoke of the need to reach a settlement of the situation in the Middle East. They pointed out the fact that the resolutions adopted by the Council in that connection formed the legal and political basis for the establishment of peace, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which called for the convening of an international conference for the settlement of disputes in the region.

86. At that meeting, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt stated:

> "Dozens of resolutions adopted by the Council, representing a basis of international unanimity which should be respected and implemented, still await effective mechanisms through which to do this. For example, the Council's resolutions on the Middle East and the Palestinian question still lack the practical and executive mandatory measures necessary in the absence of a serious response by the parties concerned. Furthermore, resolutions enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its right to return and to self-determination remain unimplemented because of the absence or paralysis of the political will on the part of some parties, and this is unacceptable. Resolutions on the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in accordance with international law and respect for the right of the peoples and States of the region to existence and security, foremost among which is Security Council resolution 242 (1967), demand a more reasonable response. Resolution 242 (1967) should be implemented and all its provisions should be complied with. The commitment to the resolution as a whole should be followed up, in conformity with the principle of the inadmissibility of the conquest of territories by force, with a view to returning to their owners all the occupied Arab territories in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, Gaza and the Syrian Golan Heights." [*2608th meeting, para. 220.*]

87. Such statements have not been confined to members of the Security Council. Statements made by representatives of all Member States who have spoken in the general debate in the General Assembly have pointed to the need for speedy and responsible steps to be taken in order to reach a just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. Yet, as we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, the question of Palestine is, unfortunately, almost as old without having found any solution, and today we are witnessing a serious escalation of violence in the region.

88. Israel's practices against the Palestinians, whether on the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and in Jerusalem or against those who have been forced out of their homeland because of Israel's occupation of their territories, will not lead to a solution of the Middle East conflict.

89. Over the past four weeks the Council has heard a great deal about such practices, and we need not dwell upon them again today, confident as we are that all members are fully aware of them and of the danger they pose to the peace process.

90. The escalation of the situation will not weaken Egypt's resolve to continue to make serious efforts towards peace on the basis of our belief that the future peace and stability of the region is conditioned upon overcoming difficulties, however numerous or severe, as well as upon seizing all opportunities that present themselves.

91. Peace based upon justice in the Middle East is an urgent need in the light of the dangers that beset the region. That need has found its clearest expression in the decisive step taken by King Hussein and Yasser Arafat, in their agreement opening the way towards moving jointly along the path to peace and to establishing rights within the framework of international legitimacy. That step was taken in light of an awareness of present-day historical realities. In its content and its implications, their agreement represents not only a courageous step in the right direction but also a response to the enormous challenges that are inherent in the question of Palestine at this important juncture. It is not only an attempt to break the stalemate but also a practical and positive development that can serve the cause of peace in all its aspects. In this connection the role of the United Nations must continue to be one of providing support for the positions and initiatives adopted by those two Arab parties and of encouraging any dialogue or negotiation aimed at reaching a just and lasting settlement to the conflict.

92. The experience gained over the long years the conflict has gone on, with the concommitant threat or use of force, makes it abundantly clear that the policy of occupation and domination has not achieved either the peace or the security that its advocates have sought. Rather, experience has made it clear that the restoration of the occupied Arab territories in return for the establishment of peace, safety and good-neighbourliness is the key to any real security and coexistence, which must be based on mutual consent. Security cannot be established by force of arms. The future will also prove the validity of the proposition that recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and of their right to self-determination is the guarantee for the consolidation and spread of peace in the area.

93. The Arab parties have made it unequivocally clear that under the joint Palestinian/Jordanian programme of action they wish to move to serious negotiations with the other party to the conflict within an appropriate international framework. Egypt believes it is high time for a new initiative to be taken that will advance efforts to reach a settlement step by step. Conscious of its responsibilities in our region, Egypt is fully prepared to play its part in that regard. In so doing, we are prepared to work with the parties concerned in reaching the settlement desired by all. It remains for the Israeli side to show a real and serious response in this regard.

94. In our view, the peace we are striving to establish, and for which we have taken many initiatives over the years, requires the following: first, the affirmation of the right of all peoples and States in the region to live in peace and security within indisputable borders and free from any form of outside interference in their internal affairs; secondly, recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination in a way acceptable to them; thirdly, Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Golan Heights and, first and foremost, the Holy City of Jerusalem; fourthly, the establishment of normal relations between all the parties to the conflict in the Middle East on the basis of equality and good-neighbourliness.

95. This international Organization has long been and continues to be the forum witnessing the interactions taking place in this historic crisis. It has considered its complications and registered its victims. It has attempted as much as possible, through its mediation efforts, its envoys, its observers and the peace-keeping troops of its Member States, to contain the repercussions of that crisis and deal with its implications.

96. It is high time, as we begin the fifth decade in the life of our Organization, that we start with real collective will to weave the fabric of peace before it is torn apart, so as to establish stability and safety for the peoples of the region.

97. The peace we desire and are attempting to achieve is a peace that maintains right and established justice and opens the way towards dignity for a genuine Arab people which deserves to live in dignity and honour like the rest of the peoples on earth—that is, the people of Palestine.

98. We therefore hope and expect that the Council, responsible as it is for the maintenance of international peace and security, will take positions that will allow such a settlement to take place and will continue to push for the implementation of all its pertinent resolutions.

99. Despite the fact that the item on our agenda today is the Middle East problem including the Palestinian question, there is nevertheless another matter, which has of course been dealt with by those speakers who have preceded me. The President was kind enough to point at the beginning of his statement on behalf of the United States to the statement adopted by the Council yesterday concerning the incident of the hijacked Italian vessel. I should therefore like to point out here, in turn, that Egypt, since it first knew of this incident—which took place outside of its territorial waters, on the high seas—proceeding from its firm principle to condemn acts of violence by whomsoever committed, condemned that incident. I have before me the statement issued on that day by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I should merely like to point out that in its last paragraph, the statement notes that Egypt affirms that the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the best guarantee of a halt to acts of violence and counter-violence and the only path that can lead to stability in the region and the maintenance of regional security.

100. As I have said, that sad incident took place outside Egyptian territorial waters, on the high seas, on a vessel that is not Egyptian but was flying the flag of a country friendly to Egypt and to the Palestinians themselves. Egypt, through humanitarian motives, so as to save the lives of the innocent, carried out a difficult task under difficult circumstances. That task was to convey messages between the parties concerned. Egypt undertook that task without any hesitation. We were happy, as was everyone else, when the crisis was resolved and the hijackers on the vessel itself told us that all the passengers on the vessel were safe and sound. The developments which have been dealt with by the news media followed. Upon the return of the specialists on the vessel and their statement that one of the passengers had disappeared in a manner indicating that a crime had been committed, we condemned that act. We still condemn it, and we are sorry, as is everyone else, that the happiness caused by having saved all the passengers was then tinged by sorrow for an innocent victim. Egypt carried out its humanitarian role believing that its conduct and motives were very clear.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

NOTES

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

[2] United Nations publication, Sales No. E. 83. I. 21, chap. I, sect. A.

[3] *Ibid.*, sect. B.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2282nd meeting, para. 82.

[5] *Ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 1* (A/40/1).

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